

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

- 1 1. (Currently amended) A system for rapid manipulation and cutting  
2 comprising:  
3 a housing,  
4 a bearing block attached to an end of the housing,  
5 a first cutting element, the first cutting element being an eccentric disc rotatably  
6 connected to the bearing block by an axle, wherein the first cutting element is  
7 configured to rotate eccentrically, and  
8 ~~a drive mechanism adapted to be mounted at least partly within the housing and~~  
9 ~~operatively connected to the first cutting element for imparting relative motion to~~  
10 ~~the first cutting element as a combination of slicing and downward forces at the~~  
11 ~~portion of the first cutting element which is adapted to contact the tissue, wherein~~  
12 ~~the drive mechanism provides torque about the lateral axis of the first cutting~~  
13 ~~element to impart the slicing force, the torque causes the first cutting element to~~  
14 ~~rotate eccentrically, and the drive mechanism causes the first cutting element to~~  
15 ~~retract relative to the housing, such that the end of the housing proximal to the~~  
16 ~~first cutting element acts as a protective guard to prevent accidental contact with~~  
17 ~~the first cutting element.~~  
18 a drive mechanism adapted to be mounted at least partly within the housing and

19 operatively connected to the first cutting element for providing torque about the  
20 axle of the first cutting element,  
21 wherein the first cutting element, the axle and the bearing block are configured  
22 such that a cutting edge of the disc is exposed beyond the end of the bearing  
23 block distal to the housing for only part of the eccentric rotation.

2-3. (Canceled)

1 4. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is  
2 ~~shaped substantially as a traditional scalpel~~ roughly cylindrical.

1 5. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is shaped as a  
2 handpiece.

6. (Canceled)

1 7. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the housing is shaped for use as  
2 a tissue manipulator for blunt force dissection.

1 8. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the first cutting  
2 element is adapted for cutting tissue.

1 9. (Original) The system of claim 8 wherein the housing is adapted for use  
2 as a tissue probe.

10. (Canceled)

1 11. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the first cutting  
2 element is adapted for cutting man-made materials.

12-13. (Canceled)

1 14. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the system includes means for  
2 electrocautery.

1 15. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a  
2 pinion gear assembly.

1 16. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a  
2 pulley drive assembly.

1 17. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a  
2 bevel gear drive assembly.

1 18. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a  
2 direct motor drive assembly.

1 19. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes a  
2 crank arm drive assembly.

1 20. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 ~~wherein the first cutting~~  
2 ~~element comprises a plurality of blades~~ further comprising a second cutting  
3 element.

1 21. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes  
2 hydraulic means.

1 22. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the drive mechanism includes  
2 pneumatic means.

1 23. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the system is  
2 configured to provide a variable depth of cut ~~is variable based on~~ determined by  
3 the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

1 24. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the system is  
2 configured to provide a variable ramp angle of the incision ~~is variable based on~~  
3 determined by the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

1 25. (Currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein the system is  
2 configured to provide a variable rate of cut ~~is variable based on~~ determined by  
3 the eccentricity of the first cutting element.

26. (Canceled)

1 27. (New) The system of claim 1 wherein the disc is eccentrically mounted on  
2 the axle.

1 28. (New) The system of claim 1 wherein the disc is circular.

1 29. (New) The system of claim 1 wherein the disc is elliptical.